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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this inquiry are to examine the area of community college professional personnel, to question the fitness of the community college instructor to fulfill the promise of the community college, and to assess the availability and quality of college preparation programs. Such topics are examined as new learning programs and practices in community colleges; skills, competencies, and attitudes appropriate for community college faculty; the results of surveys concerning which skills and attitudes were most desirable; the need for community college faculty to receive special training; the availability of graduate programs which develop needed competencies; specific programs established to train community college teachers and other staff members in teaching skills; the components of a Doctor of Arts in communication arts; and the goals of a Doctor of Arts program in communication arts. (TS)

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Contemporary Problems in Speech Communication Graduate Education: The Community-Junior College Level

ED119267

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In the case of most cultures, societies, governments, or institutions, growth is measured in centuries, and one decade is of relatively slight significance. Not so with the junior college whose birth and development span less than three quarters of a century.

Clyde E. Blocker sketches the inception and growth of the junior college as covering the years of 1907 to the present and falling into five fairly clear-cut periods based upon the nature of the major thrust and the principal function served by the institution in each time period.[1] Blocker, in this 1965 publication, assessed the then current status of the junior college in seven areas, stipulated future needs of the junior college, and made recommendations for the achievement of those needs. It is one of those areas with which we are interested today, ten years later--the area of professional personnel. In 1965 Blocker asserted that "the time is overdue for a reassessment of the education and re-education of professionals in whose hands the future of the community college rests."[2] The two specific problems enumerated were: 1) the education of those aspiring to be a part of the community college enterprise, and 2) retraining and upgrading of administrators, counselors, and teachers already involved. At that time, in programs funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation, graduate schools were informed of the need for programs for persons who would be required to direct and staff junior colleges. The specific recommendation made by Blocker was that universities and community and junior colleges should work together to develop more and better pre-service and in-service educational programs for such professionals, accompanied by a redefinition of the roles of community college personnel to guarantee greater flexibility and competence in instruction and counseling, which he believed to be the "process of the community college."

In another work published in the same year, Blocker states that the rapid development of the two-year college was being hindered by a confusion as to the type of faculty roles in regard to the functions of the two-year college.[3]

Ten years ago the faculty could be seen as falling into two camps: the conservative and the liberal. The conservative faculty member held to tradition--the tradition of the four-year liberal arts college--favoring high scholarship and a college transfer function. The liberal faculty member awarded a position to the academic tradition but did not see it as the only tenable function of the community college. The liberal faculty person was able to see technical and occupational programs as viable pursuits; community needs were deemed justifiable aims; innovative methods for providing a successful learning experience for varying student abilities were acceptable challenges.

Amid assertions that the source of the uniqueness of the community college lay in its freedom from the "inflexible tradition of higher education," the community college faculty received its severest criticism from its counterparts in the university, who scolded for numerous failures--the failure to research, write articles and books, participate in professional societies, and continue professional growth. The university professor condemned the community college instructor for too little training in his field, too little practical experience, too little background in college teaching, and too little concern with standards. Yet, Cohen and Brawer state that the community college instructor was selected almost exclusively from the ranks of the university and liberal arts college-trained applicant.[4]

Such, in brief, was the status of the community college instructor *ten* years ago--a product of the university, but, as such, deemed unworthy for the ill-defined role of the community college faculty, yet finding a dearth of courses and programs administered by the university to provide the special skills needed to perform his function--which itself was clearly defined by all researchers and critics as being the most important single factor in the community college experience.

The purpose of this inquiry is to examine the area of professional personnel once again, to question the fitness of the community college instructor to fulfill the promise of the community college and to assess the availability and quality of college preparation programs.

As early as 1970, the American Association of Junior Colleges asked Edmond J. Gleazer, Jr. to conduct the research activities of the newly-created Project Focus, a study to probe the community college phenomena, its aims, methods, and best options. The study was comprehensive, canvassing fifteen hundred persons in thirty institutions in twenty states.

The first consideration as reported in *A Report from Project Focus: Strategies for Change* was the students and faculty, the latter being the central determinant in student achievement. A summary of community college student characteristics reports today's typical enrollee to be older, home-based, in low-income brackets, working, perhaps terminal, skill-oriented, often disadvantaged, and likely to be minority. He will have increased in numbers over the past decade by three hundred percent.[5]

Moore, in *Against the Odds*, presents the community college student in much the same terms.[6]

Significant among the recent studies is that conducted by Robert H. McCabe and Cynthia Smith of Miami-Dade Community College which deals with two areas: 1) new learning programs and practices in community colleges, and 2) skills, competencies and attitudes appropriate for community college faculty. The premise in this study similarly recognizes that the nature of the student, increasingly more "heterogenous," is the number one factor in evaluating faculty performance. The community college is seen as seriously concerning itself "with developing learning arrangements that are designed with the idea that each individual has his own needs, his own base of experience and competencies, and that learning programs should be arranged to suite the individual. The personalization of instruction has become a very important goal."[7] The programs currently provided in community colleges include programs for the elderly, occupational programs, continuing programs, retraining programs, early admission, credit by examination, outreach centers, the incarcerated, TV credit, and many others.

All such programs derived from open-door policies necessitate changing methods and practices. The community college--free of traditional restraints--can and does (in fifty percent of the institutions, McCabe and Smith) initiate improved methods of learning: individualized instruction; audio-tutorial; interdisciplinary; small-group; modular courses; peer counseling; systems approach; computer-assisted learning; contracting; utilization of learning styles.

Who can deny that the job of the instructor is astronomical? Certainly, the "commitment of the colleges seems clearly to be to provide services to an increasingly disparate student population in an increasingly personalized way."[8]

In the Miami-Dade study, 72 community college administrators and faculty leaders rated competencies and attitudes as more important than discipline preparation, perhaps, say the authors, because persons with the latter criteria are more prevalent.

The skills and attitudes rated most desirable were:

1) a genuine interest in students and a commitment to helping all people learn,
2) commitment to the "Open Door Philosophy" and the more heterogeneous student body it produces,
3) mastery of the interpersonal skills--openness, active listening, supportive responding, etc.,
4) flexibility in adjusting to changing conditions,
5) strong interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary preparation and ability to apply it at the instructional level.

William G. Butt, writing in the *Community College Review*, names the following criteria in this order for selection of community college faculty:

1) a generalist within the particular field
2) competency in a second discipline
3) experience in fields other than teaching
4) ability to adapt to the local environment
5) limited (if any) teaching experience in either high school or four-year institutions.[9]

The editorial comment, presented in the same issue of *Community College Review*, strongly concurs with William Butt, stressing that the "community college teacher needs to ...be thoroughly steeped in overall discipline, ...have empathy with the low income and manual labor segments of the community...relate his subject to the every day world of his students...ability to cut through and eliminate unnecessary jargon...simplify his subject matter without cheapening it... utilize deliberately planned generalizations for the sake of communication and transmittal... and be willing and able to communicate with his community."[10]

Segner, as does Butts, calls for the graduate schools to desist in preparing students for service in other graduate schools.

The participants of the SCA-sponsored Denver Conference on the Community College Speech Program (1975) were surveyed regarding the availability of post-graduate studies for community college instructors. The respondents reflected a strong belief that community college faculty should be prepared in the subject area in the same way that instructors for other educational institutions are prepared yet they agreed overwhelmingly that community college faculty should receive a special kind of training, this being in teaching skills, philosophy of the community college, etc. They also felt that there is a justifiable need for programs for community college faculty, noting, as well,the present unavailability of such programs.

There seems to be general agreement regarding the skills and competencies needed by community college teachers. The next inquiry must deal with the availabilty of graduate programs which develop needed competencies.

Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer indict teacher preparation institutions by stating that "graduate school professors pay little attention to the preparation of teachers. Busily filling their students' time with specific courses, they frequently assume that if a person can earn a Master's Degree or a Doctorate, he can teach."[11] The concerns of the dissatisfied are that the "programs are ill-conceived, fail to address the junior college as a unique institution, do not enhance the teachers' feeling for--or humanitarian treatment of--students."[12]

That the nations community colleges have been unhappy with the kind of training their teachers get in the university is the thesis of an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 29, 1975. The article cites the recently published book, *Adjustments of Graduate Schools to the New Depression in Higher Education*, quoting David Breneman, staff director of the National Board on Graduate Education, as saying" "The call for centers specifically and solely designed for community college staff is testimony to the community colleges' view that graduate education's efforts have not been sufficient and that the problem is urgent."[13]

Breneman refers to the regional centers being established by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to train community college teachers and other staff members not in discipline content, but in teaching skills. The centers, located at community colleges and run by community colleges, also will provide analyses of state and federal policies governing operations of junior and community colleges. The first of these regional centers is being developed by the Dallas County and Tarrant County Community College districts in Texas, now three years old and enrolling five hundred community college staff members. In-service and regular graduate programs are provided with courses covering community college philosophy, financing, vocational instruction, and English instruction. Short workshops also are presented on special subjects such as "women in administration," and "college secretaries." The faculty is enlisted from nearby universities and from the community college faculty and administrative staff. More such regional centers under the auspices of AACJC are planned.

Similar programs sponsored by community colleges themselves are the Los Medanos College in California, Miami-Dade Junior College, Florida, and Portland, Oregon.

Other efforts cited in the *Chronicle* are the Nova University program, which started offering an Ed.D. program for community college staff members in various locations around the nation and operating as "clusters" of twenty-five to thirty staff members from five to six area community colleges. Studies include "curriculum development, applied educational research, college governance, learning theory, educational policy and societal factors." The third year requires a "major applied-research project", and attendance at two summer institutes.[14]

Have the graduate schools answered the indictment? A few programs are beginning to emerge which offer courses for the community college instructor: a PhD option at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, an MA program at City College in New York, and other programs at the Universities of Florida, Iowa, and Texas.

Indicative of a growing awareness of the need for programs specifically designed to meet the community college need is the proposed Doctor of Arts in Communication Arts at Eastern Michigan University. The program is intended to provide professional growth for community college faculty through close university-community college cooperation. In a comprehensive rationale statement supporting the Doctor of Arts degree, the proponents view this offering, not as a substitute for the Ph.D. universally, but as a more appropriate doctoral level degree aimed to meet the particular needs of community college faculty. The decade of the seventies is seen as one of greater stability and, possibly, retrenchment; thus the need for staff development is significant. Implementation of the program is a long-term, organized, in-service program for community college instructional personnel culminating in the granting of a doctorate.

After examining the recommendations for the doctoral program from the North Central Association, the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, the Illinois State Board Committee, and others, the framers of the Eastern Michigan University proposal have incorporated the following components into the Doctor of Arts in Communication Arts:

1. A major emphasis on subject matter competence, which features a breadth of knowledge rather than a narrow specialization, plus the opportunity for interdisciplinary study to establish the interrelatedness of various disciplines.
2. A series of experiences that are designed to improve teaching, expose the individual to educational technology and an emphasis on the philosophy and purposes of the community college.
3. An internship or supervised teaching experience.
4. Methods, techniques and tools of research according to the functional needs of the field.
5. A final project (dissertation) with a focus on teaching and related matters instead of discovery and synthesis of knowledge.

To provide the breadth of knowledge sought, English and Speech-Dramatic Arts are being combined into a degree program entitled Communication Arts. It is assumed that study in each field rather than specialization in any one of the areas will emphasize knowledge of the total discipline.

The Doctor of Arts Program will be based on the concept of a competency based curriculum. The goals prescribed are as follows:

1. Demonstrate both depth and breadth of academic competence in the selected major area of emphasis.
2. Demonstrate excellence in teaching in the area of concentration.
3. Demonstrate the ability to discuss current educational innovations and show awareness of various teaching techniques and methods by being able to demonstrate a basic understanding of how people learn and a knowledge of available materials that assist an instructor in individualizing instruction.
4. Be able to explain the role of the community college as an institution within the structure of higher education and relate the general goals and directions presented to the specific area of concentration chosen by the candidate.
5. Be able to relate the academic knowledge gained to a specific curricular or instructional need in the community college.
6. Demonstrate the ability to analyze reading difficulties of students and prepare a plan for their correction.

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The proposal is predicated on the assumption that most applicants will have completed the master's degree. The applicant is thus encouraged to plan the learning experience into three phases: the first incorporates the academic study of the communications disciplines; the second focuses on the teaching and instructional components; and the final phase consists of the final project and culminating examinations.

In a comprehensive description the Eastern Michigan University proposal Doctor of Arts in Communication Arts, considers matters of curriculum, administration, course outlines, and institutional capability. The proposal is commendable in its completeness and responsiveness to the current need for doctoral level programs for community college personnel.

A recent development in answer to the same need is that initiated by the Metropolitan Community College, Kansas City, Missouri. The "non-traditional" graduate program leading to a graduate degree in Higher and Adult Education with specific emphasis on the community college is conducted in cooperation with the University of Missouri at Columbia and made possible through the Instructional Support and Improvement Team of the AIDP, Title III. The program was started in the fall of 1975 with one course offering for graduate credit; three courses will be offered during the spring of 1976. The course titles are: Community-Junior College Teaching Seminar, College Teaching, The Junior College, and Problems in Adult Education. The courses can be taken as part of a series toward a graduate degree.

It has been suggested that a cooperative effort be made by the graduate schools and the community colleges for their mutual benefit. The success, individually or collectively, of the existing programs--regional centers, Nova University, university courses and programs--may dictate future direction.

The words of John E. Roueche and Barton R. Herrscher, in *Toward Instructional Accountability*, seem fitting:

> To speak, as we have in the past, of giving our young the "tools" with which to survive, to speak of techniques and "subjects" as the essential components of education, is to speak of trivialities. And, it is to send our children unequipped into the unknowable.
>
> All that we can predict with certainty is that the central issue of the 21st century, as it is of this one, will be the struggle to assert truly human values and to achieve their ascendancy in a mass, technological society.
>
> ...We ask, not what kind of education we want to provide but what kind of human being we want to emerge. What would we have 21st century man be?
>
> We would have him be a man with a strong sense of himself and his own humanness, with awareness of his thoughts and feeling, with the capacity to feel and express love and joy and to recognize tragedy and feel grief. We would have him be a man who, with a strong and realistic sense of his own worth, is able to relate openly with others, to cooperate effectively with them toward common ends, and to view mankind as one while respecting diversity and difference. We would want him to be a being who, even while very young, somehow senses that he has it within himself to become more than he now is, that he has the capacity for lifelong spiritual and intellectual growth. We would want him to cherish that vision of the man he is capable of becoming and to cherish the development of the same potentiality in others.
>
> ...In such a world, everyone will be from time to time both teacher and learner, but there will still be great need for teachers who, for the first time, will be free to engage in truly human tasks.[15]

Footnotes

[1]Clyde E. Blocker, "A National Agenda for Community and Junior Colleges," in Roger Yarrington, ed., *Educational Opportunity for All; An Agenda for National Action*, Washington, DC: AACJC, 1973, p. 125.

[2]*Ibid*, p. 130.

[3]Clyde E. Blocker, Robert H. Plummer and Richard C. Richardson, Jr., *The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965, p. 134.

[4]Arthur M. Cohen & Florence B. Brawer, *Confronting Identity*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972, pp. 147-158.

[5]Davis S. Bushnell & Ivars Zagaris, *A Report from Project Focus: Strategies for Change*, Washington, DC: AAJC, 1972, p. 9.

[6]William Moore,Jr., *Against the Odds: The High-Risk Student in the Community College*, San Francisco: Jossey - Bass, 1970, pp. 24-62.

[7]Robert H. McCabe and Cynthia Smith, "New Programs and Practices In Community Colleges and the Skills, Competencies and Attitudes Desirable for Community College Faculty," p. 6.

[8]*Ibid*, p. 18.

[9]William G. Butt, "Criteria for Staffing the Small College," *Community College Review*, 1975, Vol. III, #2, pp. 50-54.

[10]Ken B. Segner, "Comment," *Community College Review*, Vol. III, #2, pp. 4-5.

[11]Cohen & Brawer, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

[12]*Ibid*, p. 155.

[13]"The Search for Skill Teachers," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept. 29, 1975, p. 3.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15]John E. Roueche and Barton R. Herrscher, *Toward Instructional Accountability: A Practical Guide to Educational Change*, Westinghouse Learning Press, 1973, pp. 5-7.

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